

## Hugh Lawson White to Andrew Jackson, June 15, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### HUGH L. WHITE TO JACKSON.

Flint Hill, Tenn. , June 15, 1831.

*My dear friend*, Until Monday evening, I did not return from the West, your favor of the 1st instant was therefore not received till yesterday. I mention this to account for the apparent neglect in not returning an immediate answer.

Major Armstrong detailed to you correctly the conversation he had with me, and nothing but the situation of my daughter should now prevent my acceptance of the Office, you have tendered in such flattering terms. Accompanied by her husband she had taken a journey to the West, with a hope that travelling might aid in throwing off a complaint threatening the worst results. At Judge Overtons they buried their *little daughter* , and upon their return I met them at Sparta. Her disease is, apparently, making slow but sure progress towards a fatal termination. She is now at home so much enfeebled, that all hope of her recovery must, in my opinion, be abandoned. Were I to leave her for a residence in Washington, or elsewhere, and more especially were I to take with me her Sister and brother, *the only other survivors of my family* , such a step, would I apprehend, be immediately fatal to her.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Few men suffered more crushing bereavements than Hugh L. White. In six years tuberculosis took his wife, eight of his children, and a beloved daughter-in-law. Of his twelve children only two were left. His wife died Mar. 25, 1831, and the daughter mentioned in this letter, Margaret W. Alexander, died in September.

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Should I accept under an expectation that an absence from Washington might be allowed, until her fate was decided, the nature of her complaint might make the time of my absence so protracted, that public opinion would condemn an indulgence so unreasonable. Under these circumstances I can do nothing but decline the Office your kindness would confer.

Had I desired an additional evidence of the sincerity and strength of your personal friendship and regard, it had been most amply furnished in relation to the Office I am constrained to decline accepting; and should you for a moment believe I have made no suitable return, I beg you only to remember, that if I am worthy to be considered the friend of any man, I must have been experiencing the pangs of the dying, for a greater portion of the period, which has elapsed since the year 1825; and that from such a man but little effectual aid could be expected, even had I accepted.

Your friend

P. S. Until I saw it announced in the Globe of the 25th May, that I had declined accepting, I had been perfectly silent on the subject, except in a letter to J. K. Polk who I knew was safe. Since that publication, in answering the letters of friends, in several instances I have mentioned the fact of having declined, and in some instances very briefly stated some of my principal reasons. However, these circumstances would not have created any difficulty.